

***Supporting your child's speech, language and communication at home***  
*Attention and Listening Activities*

This resource is designed to be used at home by parents and carers to support the development of their child's attention and listening skills.

While the instructions often describe how the activities can be done by groups of children, **all of these activities can also easily be done with one child**, where the parent or carer takes turns with the child.

# Making sounds



10 mins

This is a great way to get children to play around with sounds, which is vital for the development of both speaking and listening skills.

## Getting ready

What you need for this activity are lots of different ways of making sounds. You can produce your own noise-makers (with the help of the children!) using household items. For example, make a shaker by filling an empty bottle or tube with rice or dried beans. Plastic bowls make great drums and saucepan lids function as excellent cymbals. Toy shops are full of inexpensive noise-making instruments, like rattles, bells, whistles, and so on.

## Three ways to play

### Songs and stories

Ask the children to make noises in songs and stories whenever certain characters or actions are mentioned. For instance, tell them that every time the Wolf is mentioned in Little Red Riding Hood, they must make a sound with the shaker. Every time Jack climbs the beanstalk, they must bang a saucepan lid. Tasks like these encourage children to listen extra carefully.

### Copy me

To play this variation, you need to have two of each instrument. Sit at a table, opposite a child. Give them the same set of instruments as you have. Put a barrier on the table between the two of you – a large book, for example. For the game to work, you need to make sounds without them being able to see which instrument you are using.

Make a sound. For instance, shake a rattle. Ask the children to make the same sound. To make it more challenging, create a sequence of sounds (bang, rattle, shake) and ask them to make the same sounds in the same order.

### Drums

Play a pattern of beats on a drum (plastic bowl) and get the children to repeat the pattern on their own drum (dum dee dum dum dum). To make this a little harder, use more than one instrument. For example, play a pattern on the saucepan lid and then a different pattern on the shaker. Ask the children to copy both the rhythms and the sounds.



'I can hear which sounds are the same and which are different.'



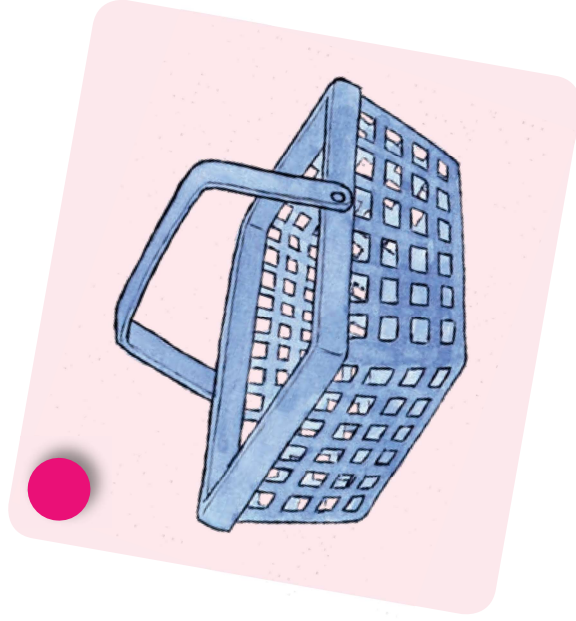
# Remembering games

10 - 15 mins

Remembering games are a great way for children to build their skills at paying attention. They are very simple to play and can be done anywhere. You can easily make up your own versions.

## Shopping basket

Start by saying something like: 'Mr Smith went shopping and bought a bottle of milk.' Ask one of the children to repeat what you said and add another item. For example: 'Mr Smith went shopping and bought a bottle of milk and a loaf of bread.' As you go around the circle, keep adding items. 'Mr Smith bought a bottle of milk, a loaf of bread and some apples.'



## Going on holiday

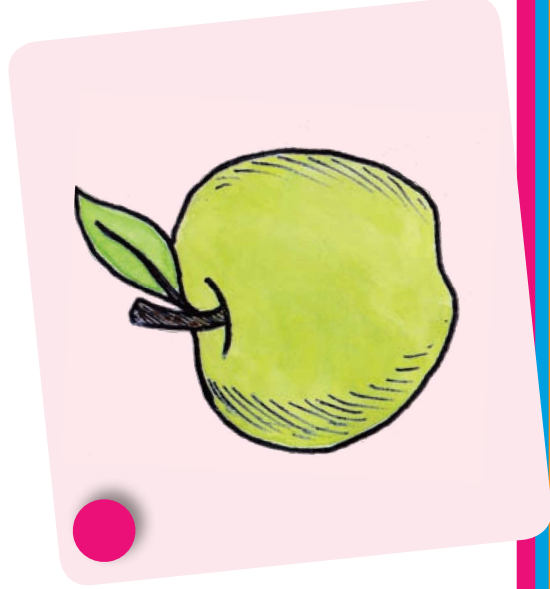
Begin by describing something Mrs Brown did on holiday. 'Mrs Brown went on holiday and ate some ice cream.' The next child should add a holiday activity and remember what went before. For example: 'Mrs Brown ate an ice cream and went swimming.'

## Same sound

Change the format a little by having children choose something that begins with the same sound as their name. 'Jude went shopping and bought some juice.' 'Billy went shopping and bought some butter.'

## Birthday presents

The same idea again, but this time the list describes the presents someone got for their birthday. For example: 'For his birthday, John got a toy car, a cricket bat and scarf.'



**Make it easier**  
Have a range of objects or pictures in a basket for the children to pull out and hold.

